



Congressman Mark Kirk's

# North Shore News



Tenth Congressional District

May 2006

## Kirk: "Protect Lake Michigan from Mercury Pollution"



Congressman Kirk met with local environmental leaders to discuss the Great Lakes Invasive Species Control Act he introduced, which requires vessels equipped with ballast water tanks to flush them before entering the Great Lakes.

Congressman Kirk hosted an ad hoc congressional hearing at the Shedd Aquarium to discuss a U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report including data showing that Lake Michigan receives more mercury pollution than any other Great Lake. The report suggests that coal-fired electric power plants are responsible for most mercury pollution. The report also calls attention to large mercury emissions from Nevada mines that may also pollute Lake Michigan.

The federal study shows that Chicagoland has become a "mercury hotspot." Mercury contamination in Illinois is so widespread that statewide fish advisories are in place warning people to limit their consumption of walleye and northern pike, two popular Lake Michigan fish.

Congressman Kirk is leading efforts to take more aggressive action to protect families living in the Lake Michigan region. Beyond mercury pollution, human threats to our Great Lakes ecosystem include sewage dump-

ing and shoreline storage of nuclear waste. These are just two of the reasons why the congressman is an original co-sponsor of the bipartisan *Great Lakes Restoration Act*. Several marine invaders like the Asian Carp and the Zebra Mussel are also threatening our country's largest freshwater resource.

"The NOAA report that I commissioned confirms that we need to speed up the cleanup of Lake Michigan," said Congressman Kirk.

### Speed Up the Cleanup of Lake Michigan

Initiatives led by  
Congressman Kirk

- Ban dumping in Great Lakes
- Establish real-time monitoring to keep beaches safe for swimming
- Construct permanent barrier to keep Asian Carp out
- Require decontamination of all foreign freighter ballast tanks before entering the Great Lakes
- Institute annual mercury pollution reports on the Great Lakes

Chicago Tribune  
ESTABLISHED 1847

### Kirk Urges FDA to boost efforts

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk on Monday called for the Food and Drug Administration to improve the government's safety net to keep mercury-contaminated seafood out of supermarkets.

Citing this week's Tribune investigation of the lack of government action on the toxic metal, the Illinois Republican also urged the FDA to adopt more thorough mercury advisories to help consumers make informed decisions about the fish they eat.

"We need the FDA to do more to protect American consumers from mercury poisoning from fish," Kirk wrote in a letter asking colleagues in the U.S. House to join his efforts.

December 13, 2005

# Students thrive in Kirk's Laureate Program

Twenty-four seventh grade students kicked off the second year of Congressman Kirk's Tenth District Laureates Program last fall with a day of laboratory work at the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine. The students enrolled in "mini-medical school," the theme of this year's Laureates Program.

Backed by the teachers and experts of his Education Advisory Board, Kirk started the Laureates Program in 2004 to provide highly-focused education opportunities to seventh grade gifted students in the Tenth District.

Mini-medical school gives Tenth District gifted students the opportunity to explore medicine and to determine whether they want to become a doctor or nurse. The program challenges gifted students to rise to their full potential.

The students also visited Naval Station Great Lakes'



Corpsman School, Abbott Laboratories, and the Museum of Science & Industry where they watched surgeons perform an open heart surgery.

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## Navy-VA Hospital First of its Kind in Nation

Joined by top VA and Navy officials, Congressman Kirk revealed the site of the "first in the nation" joint Navy-VA Hospital. The new Navy hospital, fully integrated with the North Chicago Veterans Administration Medical Center, permanently secures high quality health care for veterans, sailors

and their family members living in northern Illinois.

"By building the Navy's new hospital next to the VA, our northern Illinois veterans' hospital will never close," said Congressman Kirk. "This is the closest partnership between the VA and military healthcare sys-

tem in the country. Collaboration between the Navy and VA ensures the survival of veterans' health care in our community while upgrading medical care for sailors and veterans alike."

In October of 2003, Kirk won approval for the first stage of the integration, moving the Navy's mental health unit into the North Chicago VA. This blocked prior Administration plans to close our

veterans' hospital.

In November 2004, Kirk won approval for the second phase — a \$12 million expansion of surgery suites and emergency rooms. When this phase is complete next summer, four new operating rooms and 14 new exam rooms will open for patient care. The third phase is the most ambitious — a \$110 million Navy hospital to be fully integrated with the VA.



Northern Illinois veterans joined Kirk and North Chicago Mayor Leon Rockingham at the signing of a joint VA-DoD agreement.

**The NewsSun**

### Joint Navy-VA hospital

After nearly five years of dogged persistence, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, saw his vision — a joint Navy-VA hospital — realized on Monday. "By building the new hospital next to our VA, our northern Illinois veterans' hospital will never close," said a jubilant Kirk who championed the new hospital beginning back in 2000 when he was first running for Congress.

*October 19, 2005*



# New Traffic Control Center

## *Fiber Optics, Computers and Cameras Reduce Traffic Congestion*

Congressman Kirk secured \$3.6 million in federal funding for the new Lake County Traffic Management Center located in Libertyville. The center will help reduce traffic gridlock using fiber optics, computers and cameras to control major stoplights in Lake County. The system will properly adjust stoplights for weather, time-of-day, season changes and accidents.

The management center has 150 Lake County traffic signals online. Several major intersec-

tions also have cameras so engineers can dispatch police and firefighters immediately after an accident occurs. The traffic center will not just reduce gridlock — it will also open “green light corridors” for ambulances to arrive on scene faster.

In March the center established a Web site to help commuters get real-time updates on traffic conditions ([www.co.lake.il.us/dot](http://www.co.lake.il.us/dot)). Next year, the center will add connections to thirty-one traffic signals and 44 cameras.



Congressman Kirk was on hand to open the new Lake County Traffic Management Center, which puts northern Illinois at the forefront of technology to reduce traffic gridlock



### Remembering Our Veterans

Congressman Kirk awards WWII veteran and Waukegan resident Paul Eagon the bronze star, a medal he earned while fighting in Germany and Belgium.

## SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS

(January 1, 2001-April 1, 2006)

**141,554**

Constituent Letters Answered

**18**

Medicare Town Hall Meetings

**8,767**

D.C. Tour & Ticket Assistance

**487**

Eagle Scout & Gold Award Recipients

**985**

U.S. Flag Requests

**41**

Weekends Spent on Reserve Duty

**2,929**

Votes in the 107th, 108th & 109th Congress  
(Voting percentage 97%)

## “Kids Against Mercury”

In March, Congressman Kirk met with a group of students from Elm Place School in Highland Park. The students are concerned about the alarming mercury levels in Lake Michigan and formed a coalition to encourage local residents to seek action from their state legislators. “Kids Against Mercury” put together a list of ways citizens can help. Here are a few suggestions:

- ✓ **Use less electricity.**  
If we use less electricity, we will burn less coal and less mercury will be emitted into the air.
- ✓ **Urge your power company to include information about mercury emissions in their billing statements as a public service.**
- ✓ **Petition the State of Illinois to give power companies tax breaks for using renewable power sources.**
- ✓ **Consider boycotting products that contain mercury.**  
Know what you are buying and what you are eating.
- ✓ **Tell your representatives that you support cuts in mercury emissions.**



# I would like to hear your views on key issues we face in Congress.

*To help me represent you better, please fill out the questionnaire below:*

## Protecting Our Kids

1. Congress is considering linking all state criminal and pedophile databases, permitting school districts to review national records before hiring teachers or coaches. Do you:
- ☐ Support this reform as a needed protection for children
  - ☐ Oppose this as potentially violating the rights of school job applicants
  - ☐ Do not know

## Fuel Conservation

2. To reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, Congress is considering raising the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for all cars and trucks in America. Do you:
- ☐ Support this as a needed conservation measure
  - ☐ Oppose this as an unneeded burden on auto makers and unions
  - ☐ Do not know

## 401(Kids) Savings

3. Congress is considering establishing 401(Kids) tax-deferred savings accounts enabling parents to save for a child's college education, first-time home purchase or to start a business. Do you:
- ☐ Support the creation of 401(Kids) as a needed way to boost savings
  - ☐ Oppose this for budget deficit reasons
  - ☐ Do not know

## Immigration Reform

4. Over 11 million people are in the United States, having entered illegally. With regard to illegal aliens living in the United States, do you support:
- ☐ Granting amnesty, allowing them to become U.S. citizens
  - ☐ Arresting them for deportation
  - ☐ I do not like either option
  - ☐ Do not know

## Classroom Safety

5. Under current federal law, a teacher must show a specific suspicion before searching a student for a weapon or drugs. Congress is considering reforms to give very wide latitude to teachers to keep their classrooms drug and gun-free. With regard to this proposal, do you:
- ☐ Support giving teachers wider powers to search students without their permission
  - ☐ Oppose this proposal because it could violate the privacy rights of students
  - ☐ Do not know

## Iraq

6. With regard to Iraq, which policy do you support:
- ☐ An immediate departure of all U.S. troops
  - ☐ Announcing a scheduled departure, regardless of what happens to the recently elected Iraqi government
  - ☐ Staying until the elected Iraqi government asks U.S. troops to leave
  - ☐ Do not know

## Mercury Pollution

7. Studies show that Lake Michigan suffers from mercury pollution. Most of this pollution comes from coal-fired plants that produce electricity. Congress is considering mandating new pollution control equipment that could raise the cost of electricity. With regard to this proposal, do you:
- ☐ Support additional pollution controls, even if electricity rates rise
  - ☐ Oppose such controls because electricity already costs too much
  - ☐ Do not know

## Prescription Drugs

8. The federal government recently offered seniors the option to add coverage for their prescription drugs to their Medicare Part A and B plans. About 55,000 seniors in the 10th Congressional District signed up for this coverage. With regard to the Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, do you think Congress should:
- ☐ Implement Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, working out problems as they arise
  - ☐ Scrap the plan all together as either too expensive or complicated
  - ☐ End all options for coverage and offer only one government plan
  - ☐ Do not know

## Suburban Gangs

9. Gangs connected to international drug cartels are moving out of Chicago to the suburbs. There are over 3,000 documented gang members operating north of Lake-Cook Road. With regard to this problem, Congress is considering extending federal criminal jurisdiction against gang members in schools. What is your opinion?
- ☐ This reform would be an unwanted extension of federal law enforcement into local police jurisdictions
  - ☐ This reform is needed to support suburban police departments who are now fighting urban drug gangs
  - ☐ Do not know

## National Security Agency

10. After September 11, the President authorized the National Security Agency (NSA) to expand its international wiretaps to also monitor people who had been contacted by terrorist groups inside the United States. With regard to this program, do you believe:
- ☐ The program should be stopped and the NSA should be banned from working in the United States
  - ☐ The program should be continued to monitor potential terrorists in the United States
  - ☐ Do not know

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1. Please cut page along dotted line (left).
2. Fold top edge down to arrow.
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4. Place tape at top opening to seal.  
Be sure mailing address is showing.

# ACROSS THE DISTRICT

**Chicago Tribune**  
FOUNDED June 10, 1847

*Editorial*  
**... and keep the job honest**

The Hurricane Katrina cleanup is in full swing and so is the gold-rush for federal contracts. So, what should be done to make sure the public isn't ripped off? A good second step was signaled by U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), who rounded up 25 of his Republican colleagues to write a letter to President Bush urging a quick return to open and competitive contracting to make sure taxpayers receive value for their money. "An overuse of sole-source, non-competitive contracts could threaten the integrity of the relief efforts and allow less public-minded contractors to divert resources from the people that need it most," the letter states.  
September 17, 2005

**Daily Herald**

**Harbor hope on horizon**

An estimated \$35 million in federal and local funds will be needed to complete the harbor cleanup and open 1,600 lakefront acres for a grand vision. "This is what I believe will become the largest economic development program in northern Illinois after the modernization of O'Hare airport," said U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, who already has secured millions and is pursuing more.  
April 20, 2006

**Daily Herald**

**Kirk bill targets corruption**

Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk of Highland Park unveiled legislation Wednesday to strip members of Congress of their federal pensions if they are convicted of felonies like bribery, fraud and tax evasion.  
December 15, 2005

**PIONEER PRESS**

**Kirk Secures Hospital Funding**

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, of Highland Park, said he secured an agreement with the federal centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, allowing all Lake County hospitals to be reassigned higher Medicare reimbursement rates used in Chicago. Kirk said the agreement means that Lake County hospitals will receive more than \$6 million in Medicare reimbursements over the next three years...  
February 23, 2006

Write your return address here:

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**Congressman Mark Kirk**  
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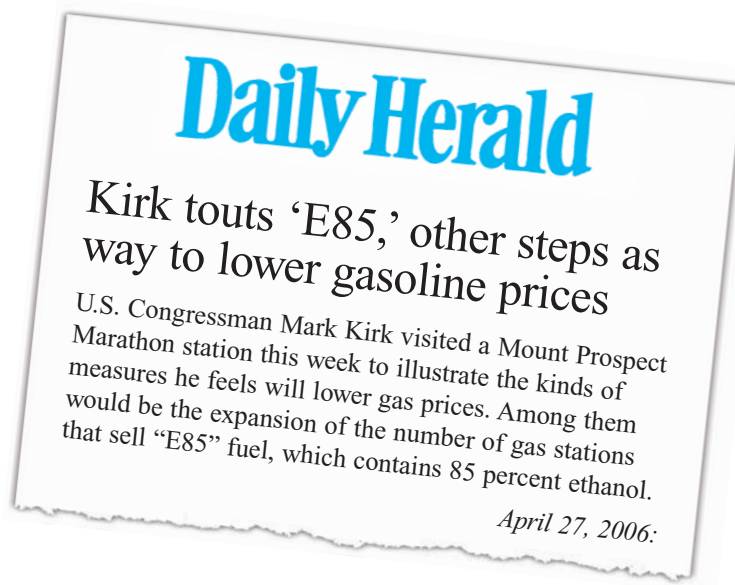


# Kirk: Action Needed to Lower Gas Prices

With gas prices headed toward \$3.00 per gallon, Congressman Kirk outlined federal regulations and laws Congress should act on to ease gasoline costs:

- End monopolies on blended fuel by creating a nationwide standard and competitive pricing.
- Increase Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards from an average of 20.7 miles per gallon to 33 miles per gallon by 2014.
- Extend federal tax credits on purchases of hybrid vehicles.
- Expand the number of gasoline refineries.
- Provide incentives for production of alternative fuels like E85 – 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline.

Congressman Kirk meets with the press at a Marathon Gas Station in Mount Prospect, where E85 gasoline is selling 30 cents cheaper than regular unleaded gas.



## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

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